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Addendum

MAIN PROGRAMME RECORD

REGIONAL BUREAU FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Asia and the Pacific region continued to experience dynamic economic growth averaging 7 per cent. Growth rates, however, varied from over 9 per cent in North and East Asia to about 1 per cent in some Pacific island countries. There were marked disparities within most countries, with over 30 per cent of the region's population languishing in absolute poverty. Although the region's economic dynamism provides a foundation upon which sustainable human development (SHD) can develop, much remains to be achieved in this area. Increasing numbers of subsistence poor and rising income disparities are exacerbated by the region's high population growth, rapid industrialization and urbanization and unsustainable use of resources. One of the major challenges for UNDP in the region is to address these imbalances, in partnership with Governments and the development community as a whole, through targeted SHD initiatives, such as those illustrated in the annex.

2. In 1996, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific (RBAP) developed a joint country office-headquarters work plan which outlined specific priority development goals and tasks and contained well-defined benchmarks to monitor achievement. The objectives are to: (a) deliver high-quality SHD programmes with measurable impact and provide support to poverty eradication efforts in the region; (b) implement the new programming arrangements, with a prompt review and approval process and accurate financial monitoring; (c) mobilize resources and strengthen constituencies around key UNDP-supported programmes in the region; (d) strengthen the resident coordinator system and United Nations partnerships in the region; and (e) enhance efficiency in RBAP business practices.

3. Benefiting from lessons learned, RBAP will continue to support national poverty eradication programmes in 1997, with added emphasis on participatory grass-roots level implementation and increased use of science and technology. Continued expansion of national execution will be combined with efforts to improve the cost-effectiveness of operations and delivery rates. Additional emphasis will be placed on establishing and strengthening networks of knowledge and expertise, while providing greater support to South-South cooperation initiatives led by countries in the region.

II. OPERATIONALIZING SUSTAINABLE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND STRENGTHENING COUNTRY OFFICES AND HEADQUARTERS

A. Poverty eradication

4. At the end of 1995, RBAP adopted a five-pronged strategy for poverty eradication to support the countries in the region. This strategy centred on: strengthening national poverty eradication programmes; conducting poverty assessments in order to assist in formulation of national poverty eradication policies; preparing national human development reports and benchmark indicators; strengthening the use of science and technology for poverty eradication; and developing effective area-based programmes, particularly within conflict-ridden countries to rebuild institutions at the community level. Based on this

strategy, clear indicators of progress for poverty eradication were evident by the end of 1996. Many commitments made at global conferences by Governments in the region were translated into Government-driven poverty eradication programmes. The effectiveness of these programmes has been enhanced by poverty assessments, with more targeted interventions that respond to root causes of poverty and focus on poorer segments of the population. Tools to monitor and evaluate the impact of the programmes were supported by benchmarks and methodologies identified in human development reports, and the capability to implement these programmes was strengthened by UNDP institution-building.

5. In 1996, UNDP allocated 33 per cent of core resources towards poverty eradication efforts in the Asia and the Pacific region. The increasing emphasis of UNDP on supporting national poverty eradication strategies is evident in almost every country in the region. For example, the UNDP-supported National 8-7 Poverty Reduction Programme in China, aimed at assisting 80 million persons living below the poverty line by the year 2000, is focused on group formation of poor households to upgrade skills and increase access to rural credit. As a follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development (WSSD), and in line with Indonesia's national poverty reduction strategy, UNDP supported a set of interventions directed at specific segments of that country's population. These included assessing the impact of poverty programmes, establishing baseline data, developing monitoring systems and providing poor communities with access to markets through information technology. In Myanmar, UNDP completed the first phase of its human development initiative, which is estimated to have benefited approximately 1 million poor persons over the last two and one half years. This initiative created partnerships with informal, community-based groups and represented the first systematic effort in Myanmar to design and carry out a bottom-up poverty eradication strategy. The human development initiative extension, approved in 1996, promotes household food security, sustainable livelihoods, primary health care, basic education and strengthening a grass-roots outreach network.

6. In support of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Declaration on Poverty Eradication, the subregional South Asia poverty alleviation programme, launched in February 1996, provides assistance in social mobilization, formulation of policies in favour of the poor and monitoring. Thus far, the programme has helped organize about 50,000 villagers into active community organizations in Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka. It has also provided training in management and technical fields to over 2,000 managers, community organization presidents and village activists.

7. Following an evaluation of the Asian and the Pacific regional poverty alleviation programme in 1995, the programme reoriented its many wide-ranging, small-scale regional interventions towards focused initiatives in more upstream areas where UNDP regional assistance could add greater value. UNDP took on a more active advocacy role in targeted areas, developing channels for the exchange of new research, expertise, methodologies and tools, and for the dissemination of successful development practices. As of December 1996, the programme helped 15 countries strengthen or prepare national poverty eradication programmes and strategies; supported 18 countries in conducting poverty assessments; assisted 17 countries in preparing national human development

reports; worked with 22 countries to incorporate science and technology into poverty alleviation programmes; and developed effective area-based programmes.

8. National human development reports have brought the central issues of human development to all levels of policy debate. As of December 1996, five human development reports (1994-1996) had been published in the Asia and the Pacific region for: Bangladesh; Bhutan; the Philippines; India (state-level); and Pacific (subregional). Reports are currently being prepared in a further 12 countries in the region: Cambodia, China, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, the Republic of Korea and Viet Nam. Related documents are also being produced in 18 countries: a socio-economic database in Pakistan; SHD situation analyses in four countries covered by the UNDP office in Samoa and in 10 countries covered by the UNDP office in Fiji (with Vanuatu's report already published in 1996); an SHD situation analysis in Sri Lanka; a human development monitoring report in Thailand; and a national poverty assessment in Maldives. The Indian Government has gone further and has agreed to prepare state-level reports using its Madhya Pradesh State human development report as a model for other Indian states. In sum, the completed reports have provided countries with up-to-date national statistics and indicators to serve as analytical tools for developing and monitoring national human development and poverty strategies, policies and programmes. Singapore has already incorporated some of the global human development report's social indicators to measure its own growth and progress. The impact of the national reports on policy, economic analyses and budgeting has enabled more effective support to national debate, poverty monitoring and dissemination of poverty-eradication strategies.

B. Creation of employment and sustainable livelihoods

9. The UNDP integrated approach to the concerns of employment, gender and sustainable development has resulted in a number of programmes that provide training for and access to livelihoods that protect the environment, while providing a continued source of income to the rural poor, especially women. In Nepal, the UNDP Training for Rural Employment (TRE) Programme emphasizes the development of the rural cottage and small industry sector at the district level through the provision of basic and vocational skills training. Thus far, the programme has trained 200 district-level officials in planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating TRE programmes. It has also provided skills training to the rural poor on various income-generating activities, primarily benefiting women. In Mongolia, UNDP established a cheese factory in the Hustain Nuruu Steppe Area, which has vital significance in environmental conservation activities in the region. The project explicitly supports the livelihood of herders who live adjacent to the Hustain Nuruu Natural Reserve and have been negatively affected by the region's measures to stem the overgrazing of natural reserves.

10. Different approaches to providing microcredit have been tested in a number of countries in the region and adapted to specific local demands and conditions. The microcredit component of the UNDP-supported project in the Qomolongma Nature Preserve in Tibet, China, for example, is based on an adaptation of the Grameen Bank model. The project has been providing loans to poor households for such

income-generating activities as animal husbandry and setting up of small businesses. It carries an initial pay-back rate of 100 per cent. In Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka, village organizations have been formed to aggregate savings from local families into pools of capital which can be used to create new jobs and businesses. In Bangladesh, the programme has led to the creation of 480 village organizations with 18,000 members. These organizations have also been linked with the formal banking sector, facilitating access to an additional $100,000 in loans. This project is expected to be a model upon which other community empowerment programmes will be based, each adapted to local conditions. There remains, however, much to be done in the area of microfinance, especially in instituting more sustainable banking relationships between poor communities and the formal banking sector.

11. The promotion of science and technology to raise income for the poor has also been an important activity in a number of country programmes in 1996. For example, in Bhutan, UNDP technology transfer for the production of essential oils from lemon grass has improved the livelihoods of rural poor. By using an improved distillation technique, cash income for poor farmers increased and the production of lemon grass oil tripled since the project started in 1993. Plans for the replication of this activity are under way and will have a major impact on the rural poor in central and eastern Bhutan where lemon grass is grown. The UNDP-United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)-supported Industrial Technology and Market Information Network (ITMIN) in Sri Lanka was launched in October to meet the information needs of the country's growing business community. ITMIN links the databases of the latest technologies in the United States, Western Europe, China, Russia and the Asia and the Pacific region, acting as a broker between two parties within the communications network. The company is also an Internet provider and conducts training in all aspects of computer and information technologies. The long-term impact of the project may also be felt outside of Sri Lanka, as Colombia, Cuba, India, Indonesia, Peru, Viet Nam, and certain African nations have asked for support in developing an ITMIN project emphasizing private sector involvement. ITMIN in Sri Lanka will act as a resource base for these projects.

C. Advancement of women

12. Mainstreaming gender into UNDP-supported programmes has been a central objective in all country offices. As a result, fewer programmes and projects are categorized separately under this theme. Instead, gender concerns have been incorporated into all UNDP programmes and projects. This is apparent, for example, in the targeting of women in employment creation and access to credit, the focus on girls within primary education and the emphasis on combating women's high vulnerability to the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS).

13. A programme for microcredit, targeting women in Western Samoa under the Pacific Regional Mainstreaming Women's Concerns among Indigenous Institutions of Pacific Societies Project, began with a training of trainers workshop in Apia. The related Women's Economic and Social Advancement Programme provides $5,000 in grants to female-headed businesses and women's groups for business start-up.

14. Leading women scientists and technologists from 13 countries in the Asia and the Pacific region met in December 1996 in India for a UNDP-supported workshop on mobilizing science and technology for sustainable and equitable economic growth. A plan of action was adopted to set up a regional network of science and technology experts who will support women living in poverty. Key issues include expanding women's economic opportunities, enhancing gender sensitization in public policy and reviewing legal mechanisms that protect the property rights of indigenous communities.

15. In the course of integrating gender considerations within other UNDP initiatives, and subsequently decreasing the number of projects with an overriding focus on gender, programmes could become subject to an unintentional neglect of gender concerns. Special attention will be given to monitoring this issue.

D. Protection and regeneration of the environment

16. Managing and preserving environmental and natural resources is a central goal of UNDP, as represented by the allocation of 23 per cent of core resources to this area in programmes in the Asia and the Pacific region. Conserving and regenerating forest and water resources is a priority area of support provided to national environmental programmes in the region. For example, the Forest Resources Management and Institutional Capacity Development Project in Bhutan, jointly funded by Capacity 21 and UNDP, is building governmental capacity to prepare national guidelines for forest management plans. Additionally, the Philippines approved the Philippine Agenda 21 as the country's blueprint for sustainable development, making the country the first in South-East Asia to adopt a national Agenda 21. The year-long, highly participatory formulation of this initiative received UNDP support through a Capacity 21 project.

17. Attention to urban environment and human settlement issues was given prominence with the preparation for, and follow-up to, the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II). In 1996, in Indonesia, UNDP further expanded and strengthened its urban programme to support more participatory, sustainable development of Indonesia's cities, consistent with Habitat II (see annex section on environment).

18. The Global Environment Facility (GEF) provided approximately $220 million to the region, covering the GEF/Montreal Fund and GEF/Small Grants/Global Programme. The GEF Asia and the Pacific portfolio covers 53 country and regional programmes. In 1996, the bureau's efforts were directed at ensuring full GEF coverage in the region in the areas of climate change and biodiversity. This involved 25 new proposals for activities that facilitated Governments' submission of their first official communication to the two Conventions on Climate Change and Biodiversity.

19. A key strategic GEF intervention in the Asia and the Pacific region during 1996 was the Wetlands Management and Wise Use Programme, focusing on maximizing global benefits from conserving and managing the high level of biological diversity, in parallel with sustainable utilization of the productive ecosystem for human benefit. This programme was initiated with the approval of

preparatory projects for China and Malaysia. It anticipates expansion in India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea and the Mekong region. Although countries like China, Mongolia, Papua New Guinea, and Viet Nam have implemented GEF programmes efficiently, delivery in other countries has been hindered by long delays in clearances and halting implementation of preparatory activities. Attention will be given to addressing these points of delay in 1997.

20. The countries in the Asia and the Pacific region account for 52 per cent of the cumulative UNDP Montreal Protocol budget for 1991-1996. The programme focus is to replace chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) and other ozone-depleting substances with ozone-friendly alternatives in the foam, refrigeration, air-conditioning, solvent, aerosol and fire-extinguishing industries. In Thailand, for example, UNDP has actively assisted the phase-out of CFCs in about 30 manufacturing firms under the Montreal Protocol, making Thailand one of the first developing countries to phase out CFCs before the target year 2001. UNDP has also implemented institutional strengthening projects in the ministries of environment in Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Malaysia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Thailand. In 1996, Mongolia joined this group after it ratified the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer, Montreal Protocol and London Amendment to the Montreal Protocol.

E. Governance

21. UNDP programmes in the Asia and the Pacific region place high importance on assisting Governments to strengthen national institutions and manage governance and public administration programmes, with 24 per cent of core resources in the region allocated to support governance-related activities in the past year.

22. The Ministerial Conference on Governance for Sustainable Growth and Equity was held in Pakistan in November 1996, involving 14 Asian countries. The Conference adopted the Lahore Declaration addressing the government-civil society interface, decentralization of government tasks and the role of private enterprises. This facilitated discussion of often sensitive issues such as corruption, increased roles for civil society and political empowerment of women. There is now a heightened awareness of the roles possible for neutral, United Nations technical cooperation activities in addressing these issues. One such area is UNDP assistance to the electoral process. At the request of the interim Government of Bangladesh, UNDP provided technical support to the electoral process during the six months of political flux in early 1996. UNDP developed three distinct projects in a very short period to facilitate the work of election observers, provide for voter education and awareness and train voting officials. This resulted in the preparation of 25,950 polling centres, the training of 400,000 polling officials and the production of election training manuals. Following the elections in June, the new Government requested UNDP support to strengthen the capacity of the election commission for future elections. In May, UNDP was formally asked by the Government of Cambodia to help coordinate all external technical support for the elections in 1997 and 1998.

23. Many countries in the region have requested assistance in strengthening local government capacity to decentralize planning and administration. UNDP support for Nepal's decentralization programme has expanded rapidly over the past few years. The current phase of the Participatory District Development Programme (PDDP) now covers 20 districts and has supported parliamentary groups within the National Planning Commission and the Ministry of Local Development to decentralize planning. To date, 126 village organizations have been established and are implementing local development activities in a participatory manner. In the Lao People's Democratic Republic, UNDP initiated a rural development planning for poverty eradication and province-based donor coordination. Provincial profiles will be produced on the basis of localized assessments of development needs and current government capacities at provincial, district and village levels. As a result, there is enhanced bottom-up planning, improved coordination among line ministries and more effective partnerships between UNDP and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

24. Phase two of the UNDP-supported Cambodian Resettlement and Reintegration Project (CARERE 2) combines anti-poverty interventions with the strengthening of local administration and democratic processes. During 1996, CARERE 2 assisted in the establishment of five Provincial Rural Development Committees, 43 Commune Development Committees and 226 democratically elected Village Development Committees. CARERE 2 assisted local authorities, communities and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to identify, design and implement 113 subprojects in health, education, agriculture, credit, infrastructure, HIV/AIDS awareness and gender mainstreaming.

25. UNDP spearheaded technical cooperation among developing countries (TCDC) efforts by the Governments of Malaysia and Singapore in offering their TCDC programmes regionally, as well as to African and Caribbean countries. In this connection, Singapore's Institute of South East Asian Studies has agreed to implement a training programme on the East Asian economic development experience for African countries.

26. In September, UNDP and UNIDO sponsored a highly successful investment forum in Rajin-Sonbong, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, attracting 439 participants who signed either contracts, Memoranda of Understanding or letters of intent amounting to $840 million for 20 different projects. The Tumen River Area Development Programme is now more receptive to external trade and investment with key border crossings opened, trade activities facilitated and new railway services introduced. More broadly, the entire area has shown a marked increase in foreign investment - more than doubling in the past two years. In addition, UNDP will set up a business institute in Rajin-Sonbong in 1997 and introduce market economy studies and English in universities in the country.

27. The Mekong River Commission (MRC) has been firmly established with UNDP support as the first and only intergovernmental organization in the Mekong basin area. The drafting of a Mekong Region Basin development plan for member countries (Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Thailand and Viet Nam) was initiated with UNDP support. The plan lays the foundation for the future sustainable development of the basin. UNDP also facilitated the establishment of a Mekong Donor Consultative Group, a trust fund and technical advisory

services in support of the MRC. The Mekong River Basin development initiatives have progressed from informal cooperation to institutionalized mechanisms, supported by an intergovernmental agreement and structure. This is providing the necessary political will and commitment to strengthen other forms of development cooperation between these riparian countries. Similarly, the Tumen River Area Development Programme is currently the only forum where senior officials from countries of the North-East Asian subregion meet and plan cooperative development programmes.

28. UNDP, as the only international organization dialogue partner of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), continued to provide targeted support during 1996 through subregional programmes on trade and environment, liberalization of trade and investment and institutional capacity-strengthening, in the context of accelerated globalization and regional economic integration. UNDP-supported studies on trade and trade-related issues were used by the ASEAN experts group to develop a common platform for the ministerial conference on the World Trade Organization (WTO).

III. NEW PROGRAMMING ARRANGEMENTS AND DELIVERY

29. Total fifth cycle (1992-1996) indicative planning figure (IPF) resources for the Asia and the Pacific region are estimated at $1.3 billion. Cost-sharing contributions, Special Programme Resources (SPR), technical support services (TSS) and trust funds are expected to provide another $250 million over this period. Total estimated project expenditures for the period 1992-1996 amount to $1.1 billion.

30. During 1996, 107 nationally executed programmes and projects were approved for approximately $95 million, representing 73 per cent of the total value of new projects approved during the year. While promoting national ownership and building national capacity in development management, national execution has also caused significant delays in programme implementation for some countries. The need to refine further procedures and provide support to the process will be addressed as a top priority in the coming year.

31. The new country cooperation frameworks (CCFs) for Bangladesh, China and Viet Nam were endorsed by the Executive Board in 1996. Fifteen advisory notes, for Bhutan, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kiribati, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the Marshall Islands, Malaysia, Micronesia, Palau, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Thailand and Tuvalu were fully processed and endorsed by the Programme Management Oversight Committee during the year, allowing for CCF submission to the Executive Board in mid-1997. On the whole, the process of consultations on the advisory notes has been extensive, covering central and local government, NGOs, academia, the United Nations system and donor partners at the country level. This will be further encouraged during programme development and implementation stages, to ensure a continuation of broad-based consultation and partnership at the country and regional levels.

32. Adjusting to the new programming arrangements, wide-ranging consultations and tightened programmatic focus has caused shortfalls in programme delivery for some countries in the region. The projected overall 1996 delivery rate for core

resources was 67 per cent. Through realistic year-end budgeting and an increased emphasis on implementation, however, the levels of commitment and delivery have shown a strong improvement in a majority of countries. Six to seven countries must still come within range of their targets for the year.

33. In the past there was a tendency for the Asia and the Pacific regional programmes to be highly dispersed, numerous and underfunded. Therefore, in 1996 a comprehensive re-examination of intercountry programming was carried out. Intensive and somewhat time-consuming consultations with Governments, four subregional forums, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the United Nations system and other partners, held at both national and subregional workshops throughout 1996, formed the basis for the Regional Cooperation Framework (RCF). UNDP is also fostering a closer relationship with the Asian Development Bank (ASDB) to support regional cooperation.

IV. ADVOCACY, BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS AND CONSTITUENCIES AND MOBILIZING RESOURCES FOR SUSTAINABLE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

34. In accordance with RBAP's work plan for 1996, the majority of countries in the region initiated a series of advocacy and information activities centred on raising knowledge and awareness of poverty-related issues. Activities included highly publicized events to commemorate the International Year for Poverty Eradication. Succinct programme information was made available to a wide public in many countries throughout 1996 in a concentrated attempt to reach a broader audience on issues related to poverty, gender, environment and governance. In the Islamic Republic of Iran, for example, UNDP produced a set of 16 brochures, which present successful UNDP-government projects. UNDP also produced poverty eradication press kits in both English and Farsi. Distribution to all local news agencies and papers resulted in wide media coverage.

35. The launch of the Human Development Report 1996 also provided an important event around which UNDP country offices, together with Government and other partners, organized launches, seminars, and follow-up workshops to give greater visibility to the issues and policy implications raised by the report. In Malaysia, the launch of the 1996 report in July resulted in extracts and indicators frequently quoted by both the media and politicians as benchmarks of growth and human development goals. Following the launch of the 1996 report in the Philippines, the President issued statements on several policy changes, including a request that all local government units devote at least 20 per cent of internal revenue allotment to human development priorities.

36. The achievements of the various "Knowledge networks" in the region established by UNDP in 1996 fostered the sharing and exchange of information, expertise and best practices and provided a basis on which to develop policy and programme frameworks. For example, the Legal and Ethical Network for HIV/AIDS facilitated policy dialogue on the socio-economic responses to the epidemic between countries that have accumulated valuable experience and those that are just beginning to grapple with the epidemic's social and economic repercussions. The ASEANWEB, established in 1996, provides access to information on economic, trade and investment activities in the subregion to member countries and the private sector.

37. The Pakistan-based Regional Governance Resource Facility was launched in March 1996, consolidating regional expertise into an operational network of knowledge-sharing. By developing databases on regional expertise, collaborative research and training programmes, this facility assisted country offices and associated government institutions to prepare, implement and monitor governance-related projects and programmes. A similar Sustainable Human Development Resource Facility based in Thailand was established this year, creating a network to promote the exchange of expertise and information in South-East Asia.

38. Non-core resources increased in 1996, as targeted in the annual work plan. The largest percentage increase of non-core resources came from trust funds. A total of eight new trust funds, managed by RBAP, became effective in 1996. A series of new initiatives in resource mobilization and aid coordination also took place. Two first-ever multi-bilateral cooperation meetings between the Government of Japan and UNDP were held in India in November and in Pakistan in December 1996. The meeting in India concluded with an agreement by the Government of Japan and UNDP to cooperate in providing support to seven programme areas in India. Similarly, the meeting in Pakistan resulted in a signed agreement by the Government of Japan and UNDP and the identification of 10 potential multi-bilateral projects for future collaboration. Such agreements may become an important building block for aid coordination and a model for cooperation with other donors.

V. STRENGTHENING UNDP PARTNERSHIPS IN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

39. A number of joint United Nations initiatives undertaken in the region during 1996 illustrate the increasing emphasis being given to United Nations system collaboration and working with country partners on a variety of issues. In Afghanistan, for example, UNDP created an effective inter-agency coordination support mechanism during 1996 when the security situation imposed operational constraints on all programmes. The United Nations system's shared facilities and services under the Logistical Support Project allowed for economies of scale and created synergies among programmes. In addition, the latest Consolidated Appeal for Assistance to Afghanistan for 1997, which solicited $133 million, is the result of a well-coordinated effort between UNDP and the United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA) and includes all United Nations agencies and NGOs working in and for Afghanistan.

40. The Inter-Agency Working Group on Primary Education in India formulated the United Nations System Support Programme for Community-Based Primary Education in 1996, which will receive financial support from UNDP, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the Government, in addition to participation from the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). This represents the first jointly programmed and cofinanced inter-agency effort in India. During 1996, all United Nations agencies in the Islamic Republic of Iran adopted an inter-agency work plan outlining areas for collaboration. This included supporting a national human development report and a poverty eradication programme, combating desertification, developing a roster of national NGOs and national experts, connecting users to the Internet and providing follow-up to global conferences.

Frequent national disasters in the country have also fostered a close, productive relationship between the Government, United Nations agencies and DHA, resulting in a pioneering inter-agency disaster response plan. The United Nations system in Thailand has worked closely with the Government in developing its Eighth National Development Plan, resulting in the finalization of the Thai-United Nations Collaborative Action Plan. Programmes under this plan are guided by a Thai-United Nations Partnership Board, which includes representatives from the Government, private sector, NGOs, academia, and the United Nations system.

41. United Nations agencies in Myanmar have initiated a common United Nations System Social and Human Development Assessment for Myanmar to enhance understanding of the country's development situation and its challenges, thereby developing a better foundation for advocacy, programming and coordination to target the poor. Additionally, 14 theme groups were strengthened or established in Myanmar. An inter-agency task force on United Nations conference follow-up was also established in Apia, consisting of UNDP, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), UNESCO and the World Health Organization (WHO). Similarly, the United Nations system in the Philippines developed inter-agency task forces to coordinate United Nations system follow-up to global conferences, focusing on employment and sustainable livelihoods, basic social services, advancement and empowerment of women, environment and HIV/AIDS. These groups are guided by the Government's social reform agenda, which integrates the key commitments of recent global and national conferences.

VI. UNDP PERFORMANCE IN COUNTRIES IN CRISIS AND OTHER SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

42. Increased and effective collaboration among United Nations partners has ensured a coordinated, rapid response to crisis situations, followed by a sustained joint effort in the recovery and rehabilitation process. During 1996, Afghanistan remained a country in crisis. Consequently, the focus of UNDP support has been on participatory and community-driven rehabilitation; development of a platform of key programmes for joint funding by donors; and logistical and programmatic support for coordinated United Nations system efforts. The UNDP/United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) programme in rural rehabilitation established representative district and village rehabilitation councils which identify and set priorities and participate in the planning and monitoring of projects at the community level. Similarly, the UNDP/United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS) urban rehabilitation component revived the traditional system of representation on the district and neighbourhood level and solicits direct beneficiary input to identify priority problems. These programmes, based on decentralized development management approaches, set the stage for enhanced capacity-building of civil society.

43. During 1996, there were natural disasters in many parts of the region. Floods in Cambodia severely affected an estimated 500,000 people in six provinces and Phnom Penh. With UNDP assistance, over $1.5 million was quickly mobilized from the donor community for emergency relief for the most affected areas. Most of these funds were channelled through DHA to the World Food Programme (WFP) for food-for-work. In response to the disastrous typhoon and flood season in Viet Nam in 1996, UNDP established a facility for channelling

disaster relief funds to the country. As of December 1996, five donors had used this facility and provided $248,400 to disaster victims. The UNDP-supported Disaster Management Unit managed these funds, assisted in identifying the neediest communities, prepared disaster relief proposals and monitored the distribution of relief goods.

44. A series of devastating floods caused severe food shortages in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea during 1995 and 1996. The FAO-WFP November 1996 Crop Assessment for the country indicated that a food deficit of about 1.83 million tonnes of grain was looming for 1997. In response, UNDP prepared a joint inter-agency appeal and initiated the Agricultural Relief and Rehabilitation Programme (ARRP). The Government accepted the UNDP proposal to provide Chinese expertise on post-flood agricultural rehabilitation, welcoming, for the first time, substantive external involvement in agriculture through UNDP. Moreover, the Government agreed in principle to participate in the wider Northeast Asia Subregional Agricultural Programme which currently includes China, the Republic of Korea, Mongolia and Russia.

VII. BUILDING A LEANER, MORE ACCOUNTABLE LEARNING ORGANIZATION

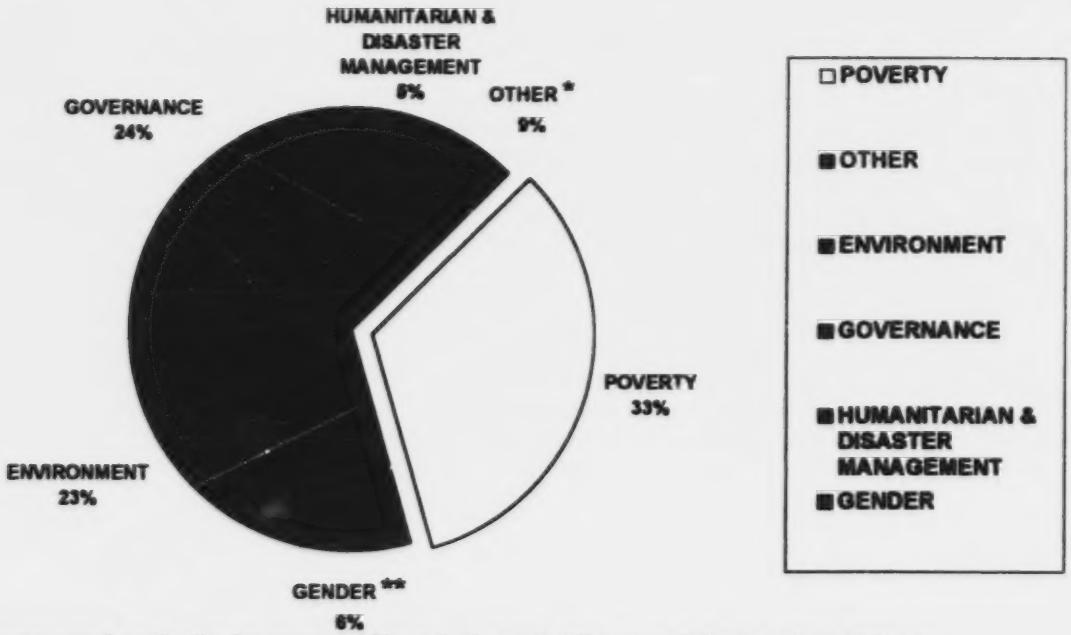
45. In 1996, significant cutbacks in staff were made within RBAP, both at headquarters and in country offices, with a total reduction of 25 per cent of Professional staff and 16 per cent of General Service staff. This has resulted in a decrease of approximately $5 million in total staff costs in 1996. To lighten the negative impact of these reductions, country offices have increased productivity by reorganizing and reassigning tasks, expanding training of national and international staff and introducing new efficiency measures. This has resulted in improvements in local recruitment, communications, budgeting and automation. New approaches to making country and regional programmes more impact-oriented and cost-effective were also developed through Centres of Experimentation in Pakistan, Thailand and Viet Nam. Simple tools for impact measurement have already been incorporated in several poverty-elimination projects, including provisions for carrying out baseline studies and identifying project-specific indicators to measure results.

46. RBAP has placed increasing importance on developing and using information systems. Forty per cent of RBAP country offices were connected to the Internet during 1996, with all offices expected to be fully connected by July 1997. In China, Indonesia and Malaysia, UNDP has already established country office home pages, facilitating access to information on programmes and publications.

Annex

APPROVED UNDP CORE RESOURCES AND ILLUSTRATIVE COUNTRY EXAMPLES IN SUSTAINABLE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME AREAS

APPROVED UNDP CORE RESOURCES WITHIN BROAD THEMATIC PROGRAMME AREAS: REGIONAL BUREAU FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC, 1996



* Covers areas such as: education, inter-agency activities, regional networks, information and advocacy, aid coordination, etc.

** Gender mainstreaming has been followed and hence gender issues have been covered in other thematic areas of poverty, environment, and governance.

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ILLUSTRATIVE COUNTRY EXAMPLES

Poverty eradication and employment creation

With the introduction of public administration and economic reform by the new Government of Mongolia, UNDP reviewed and evaluated the country's National Poverty Alleviation Programme to assess the immediate impact of reform on vulnerable groups in the population. The evaluation indicated that the programme was successful at upstream policy, but that grass-roots-level implementation needed strengthening. New modifications are expected to ensure more effective delivery.

Under the UNDP-assisted National Jute Development Programme in India, nearly 2,000 trainees have acquired skills in jute handicraft design and development and have been subsequently employed by NGOs. Of the trainees, 140 master craftsmen participated in advanced training workshops and, today, nearly 500 women are engaged in the production of jute fashion garments. Under the programme, exhibits are organized in craft bazaars and expositions to provide marketing opportunities to the NGOs engaged in the production of jute-based handicrafts.

From 1994 to 1996, vocational training supported by UNDP in Cambodia trained 5,193 persons in over 35 different skills, from bicycle repair to hand-broom making. Follow-up studies in 1996 indicate that approximately 77 per cent of the persons trained are earning income from full-time, part-time or seasonal employment or are self-employed. Over 55 per cent of those employed are women.

Gender

For China, UNDP and the All China Women's Federation (ACWF) have collaborated on several follow-up proposals to the Fourth World Conference on Women, namely the establishment of a national statistics and data-collection network, the promotion of re-employment of women in urban areas, the organization of gender sensitivity training and mainstreaming of gender concerns into policy-making. With the support of the UNDP-chaired Local Consultative Group on Women in Development, the Bangladesh Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs finalized the National Platform of Action as follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women. This support included a review by a multi-donor coalition of the cross-sectoral capacities for gender analysis in various ministries. Based on the Beijing Declaration and Plan of Action, the National Programme for the Improvement of the Status of Women was developed and adopted by the Government of Mongolia with UNDP support.

Environment

Under the UNDP Industrial Pollution Reduction Programme in Sri Lanka, consultants were trained to advise companies on how to implement money-saving pollution-control strategies. For example, a paint company reduced its dust and fume emissions by 70 per cent, while increasing its profits by $17,860 per year. Another company reduced its solid waste by 75 per cent, saving nearly $90,000 a year. This effort will now expand to cover more companies in 1997. In China UNDP efforts to upgrade the National People's Congress capacity to formulate priority legislation and refine the country's general law of environmental protection recently produced the country's first noise pollution law.

Supported by UNDP, Bangladesh published its National Environmental Management Action Plan after an 18-month formulation process involving consultations with government and civil society groups.

The global dimension of GEF activities is implemented at the local level through substantive participation of local communities and NGOs as project partners in the formulation of GEF projects in the region. In India, the Hilly Hydel Project was identified by the GEF secretariat as exemplary in enhancing participatory development and stakeholder involvement.

In 1996, UNDP continued to provide assistance to Indonesia's urban settlements. To support upstream policy interventions, UNDP, the Swiss Development Corporation and Real Estate Indonesia have jointly established the Urban and Regional Development Institute, which represents the interests of communities, the private sector and the Government. At the community level, UNDP developed innovative approaches to self-reliant, community-based housing, which is being rapidly applied, adapted and replicated throughout the country after the successful completion of three pilot projects. Over 60 communities in Indonesia have already applied this approach with UNDP support. The programme has assisted approximately 15,000 people in gaining access to subsidized credit, land and service facilities.

Governance

Following a recent UNDP-sponsored human resource development conference for ministers and party cadre in the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the Government, upon a recommendation from UNDP, established a special commission at the ministerial level to ensure improved cross-ministerial coordination in their efforts to plan, target and achieve national development goals effectively within the context of the country's transitional economy.

An action plan for administrative reform to the Sri Lankan Government has been finalized as a result of a joint UNDP-AsDB project, covering all major areas of public sector reform. The programme is focused on reassessing and streamlining existing institutions and building public sector capacity to administer effectively a growing market economy and to deliver efficiently high-quality services to the Government.

In Cambodia, UNDP collaboration with the Ministry of Health, WHO, UNICEF and the Overseas Development Administration to help rebuild and reform Cambodia's health system resulted in approval by the Ministry of Finance of a far-reaching health financing charter for the country.

Disaster management

In April 1996, a major tornado struck Tangail and Jamalpur Thanas in Bangladesh, killing nearly 1,000, wounding over 30,000 and destroying nearly 100,000 homesteads. UNDP and a disaster assessment team from DHA, in coordination with the United Nations Disaster Management Team (UNDMT), provided immediate situation reports, undertook damage assessments and hosted consultations among donors on relief and rehabilitation requirements. The UNDP-chaired UNDMT, which consists of WFP, UNICEF, FAO and WHO, agreed on priority actions, to be implemented immediately by FAO and various NGOs.

In China, UNDP led international relief efforts when an earthquake struck Yunnan Province in February. After the United Nations resident coordinator convened the UNDMT, a UNDP mission assessed the damage and worked with provincial authorities on emergency relief efforts. UNDP, working with DHA, mobilized over $1.2 million for emergency relief supplies during this operation.

Other initiatives

Advocacy and communications

In observance of the International Year for Poverty Eradication (IYPE), the resident representative in China delivered the Secretary-General's message at a ceremony held at the Great Hall of the People. An event commemorating the International Day for Poverty Eradication (IDPE) was organized in Suva, Fiji, in October 1996, during which a project document was signed by the resident coordinator and the minister of finance. In the Republic of Korea, a commemorative ceremony and seminar were held with over 130 participants from NGOs, academia and the media. In Indonesia, UNDP organized a national seminar on poverty which was widely covered by the media. In Viet Nam, UNDP commemorated IDPE by signing a poverty-eradication project for Yen Bai province which generated a series of articles on poverty-related issues in the local press. In Pakistan, UNDP, in collaboration with NGOs, arranged activities and discussed poverty issues at the grass-roots level to ensure

that these messages reached the poor. In December, the UNDP Office in Mongolia began production of a series of booklets in both Mongolian and English, highlighting prominent SHD-oriented programme activities.

Inter-agency activities

The United Nations Joint and Co-Sponsored Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) Theme Group in Mongolia, with representatives from the Ministry of Health, UNDP, WHO, UNFPA, UNICEF, the Red Cross Society and local NGOs, jointly developed the National HIV/AIDS Programme and its work plan for 1996-1997. The United Nations system in India has produced a common frame of reference for human development, poverty reduction and joint follow-up to United Nations global conference goals for India, entitled "United Nations System Umbrella Position Statement - India".

Resource mobilization

The eight RBAP-managed trust funds which became effective in 1996 are: the Mekong Trust Fund; the UNDP-Republic of Korea Trust Fund Agreement for the Support of the Tumen River Area Development Programme; the Tumen Trust Fund; the UNDP-Sweden Trust Fund Agreement for Strengthening Financial Policies and Institutions in Viet Nam Project; the UNDP-Australia Trust Fund Agreement for the Fiscal and Monetary Management Reform and Statistical Improvement Project Phase II; the UNDP-Sweden Trust Fund Agreement for the Support to Rural Development in Cambodia Project; the UNDP Trust Fund Agreement which supports the Cambodia Area Rehabilitation and Reintegration Programme; and the UNDP-Democratic People's Republic of Korea Trust Fund for the Agricultural Relief and Rehabilitation Programme.